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THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

THE BIRTHRIGHT:

A Drama

43421

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," &c.

Lodge R

"The Son of Fortune, she has sent him forth
To thrive by the red sweat of his own merits."
MIDDLETON.

"Then triumph, Leon, richer in thy love
Than all the hopes of treasure."
CHAPMAN.

LL: 9-1

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1839.

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LONDON:
Printed by WILLIAM CLOWES and SONS,
Stamford Street.

TO THE

EARL OF DURHAM

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES

THIS DRAMA;

A SLIGHT TRIBUTE OF ADMIRATION FOR

A CLASSICAL AND ACCOMPLISHED JUDGE

IN ARTS AND LETTERS;

AND A SINCERE MEMORIAL

OF PERSONAL RESPECT AND REGARD.

October 23, 1839.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA,

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, OCTOBER 31st, 1839.

MEN.

LORD ASHDALE, *son to Lady Arundel* . .	MR. J. WEBSTER.
SIR MAURICE BEEVOR, *a reputed Miser, and though but distantly related to Lady Arundel, the Heir-at-Law to the Titles and Estates, failing the children of the Countess*	MR. STRICKLAND.
NORMAN, *the Captain of a Ship-of-War* .	MR. MACREADY.
FALKNER, *his friend and Lieutenant* . .	MR. HOWE.
ONSLOW, *a Village Priest*	MR. PHELPS.
GAUSSEN, *a Pirate*	MR. O. SMITH.
LUKE, *a Pirate*	MR. GALLOTT.

Servants, Sailors, Pirates, &c.

WOMEN.

LADY ARUNDEL, *a Countess in her own right* .	MRS. WARNER.
VIOLET, *her Ward, and cousin to Lord Ashdale by his father's side* . . .	MISS H. FAUCIT.
MISTRESS PRUDENCE	MRS. CLIFFORD.

SCENE,—*The North of Devon.*

COSTUME,—*Towards the end of Elizabeth's reign.*

Time occupied by the action, one day.

THE SEA-CAPTAIN;

OR,

THE BIRTHRIGHT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

The exterior of a small inn by the sea-coast; the Castle of Arundel at a distance; a boat drawn on the beach; a ship at anchor. The door of the inn is open, and discovers FALKNER *and* Sailors *carousing within. Before a table in front of the stage—*GILES GAUSSEN *seated. Time, forenoon.*

LANDLORD (*serving* GAUSSEN, *with a flask, &c.*)

IF this be not the best Canaries on the coast, I give thee leave to drown me in my own butt. But it is dull work drinking alone, master;—wilt join the jolly fellows within?

GAUSSEN.

No.

LANDLORD.

A bluff customer. If his reckonings be as short as

his answers, he is not likely to die in debt to his landlord.

[*Exit* Landlord *within the inn.*

GAUSSEN.

Luke should be returned ere this; Sir Maurice would be eager eno' to see his old friend if he knew what news in the way of shot I carry in my locker. Humph! Sir Walter Raleigh is a great man—and introduced tobacco! (*smokes.*)

SAILORS (*within*).

Ha, ha!

GAUSSEN.

To the foul fiend with those drunken sailors! Had I known what kind of guests my fat landlord harboured I should hardly have put into this port: I hate honest men: what right have men to be honest and spoil other men's trade?

Enter LUKE.

Ha, Luke! what says the old knight?

LUKE.

Mighty little, but he is close at my heels. He carries back his own answer, to save porterage, I suppose. Thou mightst well call him a miser—not a tester for my trouble. His very face is like a board to warn men off the premises of his breeches' pockets.

GAUSSEN.

Where are our crew?

LUKE.

Rambling through the town yonder, and picking up

stray news of what ships sail and what their cargo. They are keen scouts.

GAUSSEN.

Go, select twelve of the stoutest; stow them away in the sea-cave that I told thee of, below the castle yonder. I may find work for them ere nightfall.—Hark ye, Luke. If thou hadst done a man such wrong that thy life lay at his mercy, what wouldst thou?

LUKE.

Take the first dark night for a spring from the bush, and keep my knife ground.

GAUSSEN.

I like thy advice.—Hence!

[*Exit* LUKE.

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

What, Giles Gaussen—bully Gaussen, my heart of oak; how fares it? Why, it is ten years since we met. I thought thou wert in another land.—(*Aside*) I wish thou wert in another world. You are a little altered—warlike wounds, eh? All for the better—more grim, terrible, manly, and seamanlike.

GAUSSEN.

I must thank the boy whom I took out to please thee for this gash across the brow.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh! it is by no means a handsome keepsake, bully Gaussen. What, then? you are quits with him. You

gave him a very large winding-sheet,—one that will not wear out this many a day, eh?

GAUSSEN.

No; he has escaped—he lives! I saw him yesterday—a day's journey hence. It is this which brings me hither. I have tracked news of him. He bears another name—Norman! He has a goodly ship of his own. Look yonder (*pointing to the ship*). Does this news open your purse-strings, Sir Maurice?

SIR MAURICE.

Thou traitor! Hadst thou not five hundred broad pieces—bright, new, gold broad pieces? I recollect the face of every one of them as if it were my own child's;—and all, all that thou mightst never say to me "He lives."

GAUSSEN.

Hist!

Enter FALKNER *and* Sailors *from the inn.*

FALKNER.

Yes, steady, lads, steady. The Captain will be here anon—it is the hour he fixed. Avast there, messmate! Thou seem'st one of our cloth. Dost want a berth in the Royal Eliza, under the bold Captain Norman?

GAUSSEN (*aside to* SIR MAURICE).

Norman—you hear?

SIR MAURICE.

You serve under Captain Norman, worthy sir?—Do you expect him soon this way, worthy sir?

FALKNER.

This instant, worthy sir! I am his lieutenant, worthy sir. Faith, you shall drink his health.

SIR MAURICE.

Zounds, sir! what is his health to me? It is as much as a man of my age can do to drink his own health. This way, Gaussen; quick—tell me more—tell me more. Good day to you, master lieutenant.

[*Exeunt* SIR M. *and* GAUSSEN.

FALKNER.

Good day to you both—and an ill wind go with you! By the Lord, messmates, a man who refuses to drink, without a satisfactory explanation, is to my mind a very suspicious character.

SAILOR.

Hurrah for the Captain! hurrah!

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Well met, lads! beshrew me but the sound of your jolly welcome is the merriest music I've heard since we parted. Have ye spent all your doubloons?

FIRST SAILOR.

Pretty nearly, Captain.

NORMAN.

That's right—we shall be all the lighter in sailing! Away to the town—and get rid of these pieces for me. Off; but be back an hour before sunset.

[*Exeunt* Sailors.

What should I do with all this prize-money
If it were not for those brave fellows?—faith,
They take a world of trouble off one's hands!
How fares it, Falkner?—thou hast seen thy home?—
All well?—

FALKNER.

All well! my poor old father, bless him,
Had known reverse—he tills another's land,
And crops had fail'd. Oh, man, I was so happy
To pour my Indian gold into his lap,
And cry "Your sailor son has come to drive
Want from his father's door!"

NORMAN.

That hour were worth
A life of toil!—well, and thy mother?—I
Have never known one—but I love to see
A man's eyes moisten and his colour change
When on his lips lingers the sweet name "MOTHER!"
Thy mother bless'd thee!

FALKNER.

Scarce with words;—but tears
And lifted hands, and lips that smiled dear thanks
To the protecting Heaven—*these* bless'd me!

NORMAN.

Friend,
I envy thee!—

FALKNER.

Eno' of me—now for thyself, what news?
Thy Floweret of the West—thy fair betroth'd—
The maid we rescued from the Afric corsair

With her brave father—in the Indian seas—
Thou'st seen her ?—

NORMAN.

No!—I had more wisely, saved
My time and speed. Her sire is dead—the stranger
Sits at his hearth; and with her next of kin
Hard by this spot—this very spot—dear Falkner,
My Violet dwells: look where the sunlight gilds
The time-worn towers of stately Arundel—
Thither my steps are bound;—a happy chance
Our trysting-place should have been chosen here!—
I'd not have gone one bowshot from the path
That leads my soul to bask in Violet's eyes—
No, not for all the lands my journey traversed,
Nor—what is more—for the best ship that ever
Bore the plumed Victory o'er the joyous main.

[*Going out.*

FALKNER.

Hold—but the priest, thy foster-father, Onslow—
Hast thou sought *him?*

NORMAN.

Thou dear old man, forgive me!
I do believe as whirlpools to the sea
Love is to life!—Since first I leapt on land
I have had no thought—no dream—no fear—no hope
Which the absorbing waves of one strong passion
Have not engulphed!—Wilt serve me Falkner?—Bear
This letter to the priest—the place inscribed
Scarce two hours' journey hence;—say I will seek him
Perchance this night—if not, the morrow's dawn.

Let all good news be glad upon thy tongue—
How I am well—strong—gay—how every night—
Mark—tell him this—(good men at home are apt
To judge us seamen harshly)—every night
On the far seas his foster-son recall'd
The words he taught my infant lips,—and pray'd
Blessings on that grey head.

FALKNER.

I'll do thy bidding.

NORMAN.

So now to Violet.

FALKNER.

Hark!—thy men are true—
Thy ship at hand: if she say "ay"—hoist sail,
Off with the prize. I prithee, is she rich?—

NORMAN.

Her sire died poor—thank Heaven, she is *not* rich!

FALKNER.

I'm glad to hear it—Had she lands and beeves,
And gold, you might forswear the sea.

NORMAN.

The sea!
No—not for Beauty's self! the glorious sea—
Where England grasps the trident of a god,
And every breeze pays homage to her flag,
And every wave hears Neptune's choral nymphs
Hymn with immortal music England's name!—
Forswear the sea! My bark shall be our home;—
The gale shall chaunt our bridal melodies;—

The stars that light the angel palaces
Of air, our lamps;—our floors the crystal deep
Studded with sapphires sparkling as we pass;—
Our roof—all Heaven!—my Beautiful, my Own!
Never did sail more gladly glide to port
Than I to thee! my anchor in thy faith,
And in thine eyes my haven.—
Farewell, Falkner.

[*Exeunt* NORMAN *and* FALKNER *at opposite sides.*

SCENE II.

The Gardens of the Castle of Arundel.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

It is the day—now five-and-twenty years
Elapsed—the anniversal day of woe!
O Sun, thou art the all-piercing eye of Heaven,
And to thy gaze my heart's dark caves lie bare
With their unnatural secret.—Silence, Conscience!
Have I not rank—power—wealth—unstain'd repute?
So will I wrap my ermine round the past,
And—Ah—he comes! my son—my noble boy,
I see thee, and air brightens!—

LORD ASHDALE (*speaking without to* Servants).
Yes—old Rowland!—
And, stay, be sure the falcon which my Lord
Of Leicester sent me. We will try his metal.

Enter ASHDALE.

Good morrow, mother—Hum—methought that Violet
Were here. Well! what with *you* and Mistress
Prudence,
That virgin legacy of starch and buckram
Which Violet's father (rest his soul!) bequeath'd her,
I might as well be cousinless.

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son,
She is no bride for Arundel's young heir.

ASHDALE.

Who spoke of brides?—Can we not gaze on Beauty
Save by the torch of Hymen?—To be gallant—
Breathe out a score of sighs, or vows, or sonnets—
Mirror the changes in that Heaven called "Woman"—
And smooth our language to a dainty sadness;—
All this—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Is love!—

ASHDALE.

No—No—*amusement*, mother.
The pastoral recreation of the groves
Where birds and shepherds dissipate their dulness
By the sweet pastime amorous poets sing of.
You take this matter far too solemnly;
I own I would abridge the days—the days (*yawning*)
Are wondrous lengthy in the country, mother—
By practising the bow of Cupid, just

To keep one's hand in, with my blush-faced cousin!
How does this plume become me?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Well! yet I
Would have it sweep less loosely.

ASHDALE.

Now-a-days
Our love is worn just as I wear this plume,
A glancing feather, gay with every wind,
And playing o'er a light and giddy brain
Such as your son's—(*kissing her hand*)—Let the plume play, sweet mother!

LADY ARUNDEL (*fondly*).

Ah! Percy, Percy!

ASHDALE.

Well, I hear my steed
Neighing impatience, and the silver bells
On my dark falcon shaking their own gladness
Into the limber air;—the sun will halt
Midway in heaven ere my return; meanwhile,
If you would keep me faithful to your hand,
Give me my wings—in other words (now, frown not),
The court, the camp, or any life but this,
If my fair cousin saddens all my sunshine
With eyes so coldly gentle;—fare you well.

[*Exit* ASHDALE.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Too light—too vain for his ancestral honours—

And yet, what mother does not love her son
Best for the faults she chides in him?

Enter VIOLET *and* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

My Violet,
Why still this pensive brow—this garb of grief?

VIOLET.

Lady, I am an orphan!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Nay, take comfort.—
Yet is there not a softer sorrow, Violet,
In thy meek eyes than that which bathes with tears
A father's holy urn? Thou turn'st away—
(*Angrily*)—Does thy gaze rove for Ashdale?
Girl, beware—
The love that trifles round the charms it gilds
Oft ruins while it shines.

VIOLET.

You can speak thus,
Yet bid me grieve not that I am an orphan!

LADY ARUNDEL (*touched*).

Forgive me, I was hasty!—No, you do not—
Say it—you do not love my graceless Percy?

VIOLET.

You know that I have shunn'd him!—I am poor;
But Poverty is proud (*aside*), and Memory faithful.

LADY ARUNDEL (*as to herself*).

I have high hopes for Ashdale—bright desires—
Wild schemes—the last son of a race whose lords

Have sought their mates beside the hearth of kings,
He stands before me as a dream of glory,
Haunting some young ambition; and mine eyes
Pierce to the future, when these bones are dust,
And see him princeliest of the lion tribe
Whose swords and coronals gleam around the throne,
The guardian stars of the Imperial Isle.
Kings shall revere his mother!

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE (*aside to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Hark! he lives!

LADY ARUNDEL.

He! who?

SIR MAURICE.

The young gentleman who stands between your Percy and his inheritance! Ugh, ugh! (*coughing*). It is very cold. (*To* MISTRESS PRUDENCE.) Suppose you take a walk with your fair charge, Mistress Prudence; and, not to waste your time, you can pray for grace to spin me a pair of lambs-wool stockings against Michaelmas.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Stockings, Sir Maurice! Marry, come up; *is* that a delicate allusion?

[*Walks up the stage with* VIOLET.

SIR MAURICE (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

I tell thee,—he lives; he is at hand; no longer a babe, a child, a helpless boy; but a stout man, with a

ship, and a name, and a crew,—and money, for what I know. Your son Percy is a fine youth. It is a pity his father married before, and had other sons. But for your Lordships of Ashdale and Arundel, your Percy would be as poor—as poor as old Maurice Beevor. The air is very keen. Poverty is subject to ague (*shivers*), and to asthma (*wheezes*), and to cold rheums and catarrhs (*sneezes*), and to pains in the loins, lumbago, and sciatica (*rubs himself*); and when Poverty begs, the dogs bark at it; and when Poverty is ill, the doctors mangle it; and when Poverty is dying, the priests scold at it; and when Poverty is dead, nobody weeps for it. If this young man prove his case, your son, Percy Ashdale, will be very poor!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son, my Percy! but the priest is faithful. He has sworn——

SIR MAURICE.

To keep thy secret only while thy father and thy spouse lived: they are dead. But the priest has no proofs to back his tale?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas! he has.

SIR MAURICE.

He has! Why did you never tell me that before?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Because—because (*aside*) I feared thy avarice more than the priest's conscience.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

Hum! she must come to me for aid now. I will get these proofs. Under the surface of this business I see a great many gold and silver fishes. Hum! I will begin to angle!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My own thoughts confuse me. What should be done?

SIR MAURICE.

I know a nice little farm to be sold on the other side of the river Ex; but I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do you trifle with me? What is your counsel?

SIR MAURICE.

There is a great deal of game on it; partridges, hares, wild geese, snipes, and plovers (*smacking his lips*); besides a magnificent preserve of sparrows, which I can always sell to the little blackguards in the streets for a penny a hundred. But I am very poor—a very poor old knight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Within, within! You shall have gold—what you will; we must meet this danger!

SIR MAURICE.

If she had said "gold" at first, I should have saved

exactly one minute and three quarters! Madam, I follow you. Never fear, I will secure the proofs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I dreamed of him last night; a fearful dream!

[*Exit* LADY ARUNDEL *within the house.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE *and* VIOLET *advance.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The old miser! See how I will chafe him. (*To* SIR MAURICE, *curtsying very low.*) Worshipful Sir Maurice, may I crave your blessing?

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

I never heard of a man being asked to give his blessing who was not expected to give something else along with it. (*Aloud.*) Chut, chut! what do you want with a blessing, you elderly heathen?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, it does not cost anything.

SIR MAURICE (*aside*).

That's a jibe at my poverty. Every fool has a stone for the poor. (*Aloud.*) Does not cost anything! Does it *bring in* anything? What will you give for it?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

This ribbon.

SIR MAURICE (*taking the ribbon*).

Hum! it will do for a shoe-tie. There, bless you,

and mend you, and incline your sinful old heart to my lambs'-wool stockings! Do you want to be blessed too, child?

VIOLET.

Nay, indeed, sir!

SIR MAURICE.

The girls grow perter every day! That hypocritical Jezabel looks all the merrier for my benediction. I am afraid she has got a bargain out of me.

[*Exit within the house.*

Manent VIOLET—MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Now would I give my best peach-coloured padusoy to know why that malicious old miser has so mighty an influence with the Lady of Arundel.

VIOLET.

You forget he is her relative; nay, failing Lord Ashdale, the heir-at-law to the estates of Arundel. —Ah, Mistress Prudence, how shall I thank thee for aiding me to baffle the unwelcome suit of this young lord?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Dear child, I am amply repaid for it by my own conscience—(*aside*) and the young lord's mother. You sigh, sweetheart—thinking still of your absent sailor?

VIOLET.

When do I cease to think of him?—and now that my poor father is gone, more than ever. His pride

might have forbid my union with one of obscure birth—but now—

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

He is indeed a cavalier of very comely presence! How noble he looked the day he leaped on board the Corsair—with his bold crew shouting round him—"England and Elizabeth—Norman to the rescue!" I think I see him now—his eyes flashing through the smoke. Ah, lady-bird, but for him we two innocent virgins would have been put up for sale in the Beauty-Market at Tunis! Why, you don't hear a word I say. Well, if you like solitude, as the young lord is abroad for the forenoon, I will leave you awhile; I have my great tapestry-work of the loves of King Solomon and Queen Sheba to finish; and when one has ceased to feel love it is a comfort at least to create it—in tent-stitch.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

O for some fairy talisman to conjure
Up to these longing eyes the form they pine for!
And yet in love there's no such word as absence!
The loved one, like our guardian spirit, walks
Beside us ever,—shines upon the beam—
Perfumes the flower—and sighs in every breeze!
Its presence gave such beauty to the world
That all things beautiful its likeness are;
And aught in sound most sweet, to sight most fair,
Breathes with its voice, or like its aspect smiles.

Enter NORMAN.

There spoke my fancy, not my heart!—Where art thou,
My unforgotten Norman?

NORMAN.

At thy feet!
Oh, have I lived to see thee once again?
Breathe the same air?—my own, my blessed one!
Look up—look up—these are the arms which shelter'd
When the storm howl'd around; and these the lips
Where, till this hour, the sad and holy kiss
Of parting linger'd—as the fragrance left
By angels when they touch the earth and vanish.
Look up—Night never panted for the sun
As for thine eyes, my soul!—

VIOLET.

Thrice joyous day!
My Norman!—is it thou, indeed?—my Norman!

NORMAN.

Look up, look up, my Violet—weeping? fie!
And trembling too—yet leaning on my breast.
In truth thou art too soft for such rude shelter!
Look up—I come to woo thee to the seas,
My sailor's bride—hast thou no voice but blushes?
Nay—from those roses let me, like the bee,
Drag forth the secret sweetness!—

VIOLET.

Oh, what thoughts
Were kept for speech when we once more should meet,
Now blotted from the page—and all I feel
Is—*Thou* art with me!—

NORMAN.

Not to part again.

Enter MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

What do I see?—I thought that I heard voices!
Why, Captain Norman!—It must be his ghost!

NORMAN.

Ah, my fair governante!—By this hand,
And this most chaste salute, I'm flesh and blood!

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Fie, Captain, fie! But pray be gone—The Countess—
If she should come—

NORMAN.

Oh, then I am a ghost!

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Still the same merry gentleman! But think
Of my responsibilities. What would
The Countess say, if I allowed myself
To see a stranger speaking to her ward?

NORMAN.

See, Mistress Prudence?—oh, if that be all,
What see you *now*?

[*Clapping a piece of gold to the left eye.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Why, nothing with the left eye—
The right has still a morbid sensibility!

NORMAN.

Poor thing!—this golden ointment soon will cure it!

[*Clapping another piece of gold to the right eye.*

What see you now, my Prudence?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Not a soul!

NORMAN (*aside*).

Faith, 'tis a mercy on a poor man's purse
That some old ladies were not born with three eyes!

[PRUDENCE *goes up the stage.*

VIOLET.

Nay, my own Norman—nay!—You heard no step?
This awful woman—

NORMAN.

Woman! a sweet word!
Too sweet for terror, Violet!—

VIOLET.

You know not
The Dame of Arundel—her *name* has terror!
Men whisper sorcery where her dark eye falls;
Her lonely lamp outlives Night's latest star,
And o'er her beauty some dark memory glooms,
Too proud for penitence—too stern for sorrow.—
Ah! my lost father!—

NORMAN.

Violet, thou and I
Perchance are orphans *both* upon the earth:
So turn we both from earth to that great mother
(The only parent I have known), whose face
Is bright with gazing ever on the stars—
The Mother Sea;—and for our Father, Violet,
We'll look for *Him* in heaven!

[*They go up the stage.*

Enter LADY ARUNDEL *and* SIR MAURICE.

[MISTRESS PRUDENCE *creeps off.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

It must be so!—
There is no other course!

SIR MAURICE.

Without the proofs
The old man's story were but idle wind—
This rude but hunger-witted rascal shall
To Onslow's house—seize on the proofs—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Quick!—quick!—
See to it quick, good kinsman!

[*Exit* SIR MAURICE.

Re-enter NORMAN *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

It is she!
Meet her not—nay, you know not her proud temper!

NORMAN.

Pshaw for her pride!—present me boldly!—'Sdeath!
Blush you for me?—He who's a king on deck
Is every subject's equal on the land.
I will advance!

LADY ARUNDEL (*turning suddenly*).

Avenging angels, spare me!

NORMAN.

Pardon the seeming boldness of my presence.

VIOLET.

Our gallant countryman, of whom my father
So often spoke, who from the Algerine
Rescued our lives and freedom.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah!—your name, sir.

NORMAN.

A humble name, fair lady;—Norman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

So!
Arm me, thou genius of all women—Craft!
Sir, you are welcome. Walk within and hold
Our home a hostel while it lists you.

NORMAN.

Madam,
'Twill be a thought for pride in distant times
To have been your guest.

LADY ARUNDEL.

He knows not what I am.
I will forfend all peril. Fair sir, follow.
[*Re-enters the Castle.*

VIOLET.

Strange—Norman!

NORMAN.

What?

VIOLET.

I never knew her yet
So courteous to a stranger.

NORMAN.

Ah, sweet lass!
I told thee right. We Princes of the Sea
Are no such despicable gallants, eh?
O thought of joy!—one roof to shelter both,—
To see thee, hear thee, touch thy hand, and glide
By thy dear side adown the blessed time!
A most majestic lady!—her sweet face
Made my heart tremble, and call'd back old dreams
Of——Well—Has she a son?

VIOLET.

Ah, yes!

NORMAN.

In truth
A happy man!

VIOLET.

Yet he might envy thee!

NORMAN.

Most arch reprover, yes!—as kings themselves
Might envy one whose arm entwines thee thus!

[*Exeunt within the Castle.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A room in the Castle.

Enter Servant, *preceding* SIR MAURICE.

SERVANT (*insolently*).

You can take a seat, Sir Maurice; my Lady is engaged. She will see you when her leisure suits.

SIR MAURICE.

What a modest, respectful, civil fellow it is! you know behaviour to a man of quality, I see; if I did not fear to corrupt thy morals, by this light I would give thee a penny.

SERVANT (*half aside*).

"A man of quality!"—a beggarly poor cousin—marry, come up! [*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Ah, there it is, a beggarly poor cousin!
Up from my cradle, a poor beggarly cousin!
Butt for my Lord—convenience for my Lady—
Jibe for the lackey. And men blame Sir Maurice
For loving gold!—My youth was drudged away
In penury and dependence—manhood went
In piling wealth that age might mount to power.
How the sleek rogues would fawn on the poor cousin

If they could peep into his money-chest!
Let Gaussen get the proofs, and half the lands
Of this proud Countess scarce shall wring them from me!
Then let the spendthrift Percy be the heir,
I'll get the other half in mortgages,
Loans, and *post obits*. Ha, ha! who will then be
The beggarly poor cousin?

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

I've despatch'd
Gaussen to Onslow's house—Well, why so pale?

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is beneath my roof—this youth, this Norman—
My guest!

SIR MAURICE.

Your guest! (*vindictively*)—The fly is in the web!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Scarce had you left, when, lo! he stood before me.
I knew him ere he spoke—his father's eyes
Look'd me to stone in his—I did not swoon,
I did not tremble!

SIR MAURICE.

Chut, chut! you dissembled
Of course—you are a woman!

LADY ARUNDEL.

What dark perils
Gather around me now!

SIR MAURICE (*whispering*).

Remove him then
While yet 'tis time.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Remove?—thy stealthy voice
Curdles my veins. Remove him?—yes; I have
A scheme to make all safe. I learn, thro' Prudence,
That he loves Violet—woo'd her months ago
In the far Indian seas. 'Twas he who saved her
When, homeward from the isle her father govern'd,
Their ship was captured by the Algerine.

SIR MAURICE (*impatiently*).

Well, well;—I see—you will befriend the suit?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ay, and promote the flight!—To some fair clime
In the New World the hurrying seas shall waft them,
And I shall sleep in peace.

SIR MAURICE.

He loves the girl!
What will thy Percy say—Hotspur the Second—
When he discovers——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere he learn the love,
Their bark is on the deep. I dare not tarry.
He is return'd—is with them now—a spark
Would fire his jealous humour. Be at hand,
Lest I may need thy aid.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'rt on the abyss!

LADY ARUNDEL.

But my brain reels not, and my step is firm!

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

In love with Violet! I see, I see;
I'll set this fiery Percy on his rival.
If one should perish by the sword, the other
Dies by the law. Thanks to these proofs, I'll make
The rival's contest seem the assassin's snare.
Ha, ha! were these men dead, I should be heir
To Arundel and Ashdale. For the Countess—
The worm's already at her heart! Ah, shall I
Then be a miser?—Ho, there! my Lord's lackeys!—
Room for the Earl of Arundel! You dined
With the Earl yesterday? A worthy Lord!
I'll marry a young bride, get heirs, and keep
A lean poor cousin of my own to play
At leapfrog with the little Maurices.

Enter LORD ASHDALE (*in disorder*).

ASHDALE.

By Heavens! this stranger's insolence would fire
An anchorite's patience. 'Sdeath! his hand press'd hers,
His breathing fann'd her locks.

SIR MAURICE.

How now, my Hector,
My diamond, apple of my eye? How now?—
Chafed, vexed?

ASHDALE.

Home, home, Anatomy, and drive
The mice from thy larder.

SIR MAURICE.

Mice!—Zounds, how can I
Keep mice?—I can't afford it—they were starved
To death an age ago!—the last was found,
Come Christmas three years, stretched beside a bone
In that same larder—so consumed and worn
By pious fast—'twas awful to behold it!
I canonized its corpse in spirits of wine,
And set it in the porch—a solemn warning
To thieves and beggars. (*Aside*) Shall I be avenged—
Shall I—for this? Come, come, my pretty Percy;
I'll tell thee why thou strid'st about a lion:—
Dogs would invade thy bone. This stranger loves
Thy Violet.

ASHDALE.

Loves her!

SIR MAURICE.

And will win her too—
Unless I help thee—for (but mum!—no word of it)
Thy mother backs his suit.—Thou art no match
My innocent Percy, for a single woman;
But two—a virgin and a widow—would
Have made King Solomon himself a ninny.

ASHDALE.

All Egypt's plagues confound this fellow! Deaf
Ev'n to affront.—He wards off all my taunts

With a blunt, sailorlike, and damn'd good humour
That makes me seem, ev'n to myself, less like
An angry rival than a saucy clown.

SIR MAURICE.

Be cool—be cool now—take a walk with me,
And talk upon it.

ASHDALE.

Wilt thou really serve me?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, and for nothing too!—you patient saints
Make miracles. Ha, ha! you like a jest
On old Sir Maurice. All men joke upon
The poor old cousin—ha, ha, ha!—Come, Hotspur.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Gothic hall.—On one side a huge hearth, over which a scutcheon and old banners; the walls hung with armour and ancient portraits.—In the front of the stage a table spread with fruits and wine.

LADY ARUNDEL—NORMAN—VIOLET.

NORMAN.

Ha, ha! in truth we made a scurvy figure
After our shipwreck.

LADY ARUNDEL.

You jest merrily
At your misfortunes!

NORMAN.

'Tis the way with sailors;
Still in extremes. I can be sad sometimes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your wanderings have been long: your sight will bless
Your parents?

NORMAN.

Ah! I never knew that word.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your voice has sorrow in its calm. If I
In aught could serve you, trust me!

VIOLET.

Trust her, Norman
Methinks in the sad tale of thy young years
There's that which makes a friend, wherever Pity
Lives, in the heart of woman.

NORMAN (*to* LADY ARUNDEL).

Gentle lady,
The key of some charm'd music in your voice
Unlocks a long-closed chamber in my soul;
And would you listen to an outcast's tale,
'Tis briefly told. Until my fourteenth year,
Beneath the roof of an old village priest,
Nor far from hence, my childhood wore away.

Then waked within me anxious thoughts and deep.
Throughout the liberal and melodious nature
Something seem'd absent—what I scarcely knew—
Till one calm night, when over earth and wave
Heaven look'd its love from all its numberless stars—
Watchful yet breathless—suddenly the sense
Of my sweet want swell'd in me, and I ask'd
The priest, *why I was motherless!*

LADY ARUNDEL.

And he?

NORMAN.

Wept as he answered, "I was nobly born!"

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

The traitor!

NORMAN.

And that time would bring the hour,
As yet denied, when from a dismal past
Would dawn a luminous future. As he spake
There gleam'd across my soul a dim remembrance
Of a pale face in infancy beheld—
A shadowy face, but from whose lips there breathed
The words that none but mothers murmur!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh,
My heart, be still!

NORMAN.

'Twas at that time there came
Into our hamlet a rude, jovial seaman,

With the frank mien boys welcome, and wild tales
Of the far Indian lands, from which mine ear
Drank envious wonder. Brief—his legends fired me,
And from the deep, whose billows wash'd the shore
On which our casements look'd, I heard a voice
That woo'd me to its bosom: Raleigh's fame,
The New World's marvels, then made old men heroes,
And young men dreamers! So I left my home
With that wild seaman.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ere you left, the priest
Said nought to make less dark your lineage?

NORMAN.

No;
Nor did he chide my ardour. "Go," he said;
"Win for thyself a name that pride may envy,
And pride, which is thy foe, will own thee yet!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

I breathe more freely!

NORMAN.

Can you heed thus gently
The stranger's tale? Your colour comes and goes.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Your story moves me much: pray you, resume.

NORMAN.

The villain whom I trusted, when we reached
The bark he ruled, cast me to chains and darkness,

And so to sea. At length, no land in sight,
His crew, dark swarthy men—the refuse crimes
Of many lands—(for he, it seems, a pirate)—
Call'd me on deck—struck off my fetters: "Boy,"
He said, and grimly smiled; "not mine the wrong:
Thy chains are forged from gold, the gold of those
Who gave thee birth!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

A lie! a hideous lie!
Be sure a lie!

NORMAN.

I answer'd so, and wrench'd
From his own hand the blade it bore, and struck
The slanderer to my feet. With that a shout,
A hundred knives gleam'd round me; but the pirate,
Wiping the gore from his gash'd brow, cried, "Hold;
Such death were mercy."—Then they grip'd and bound me
To a slight plank; spread to the wind their sails;
And left me on the waves alone with God!

VIOLET (*taking his hand*).

My heart melts in my eyes:—and HE preserved thee!

NORMAN.

That day, and all that night, upon the seas
Toss'd the frail barrier between life and death.
Heaven lull'd the gales; and, when the stars came forth,
All look'd so bland and gentle that I wept,
Recall'd that wretch's words, and murmur'd, "Wave

And wind are kinder than a parent." Lady,
Dost *thou* weep also?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do I? Nay, go on!

NORMAN.

Day dawn'd, and, glittering in the sun, behold
A sail—a flag!

VIOLET.

Well, well.

NORMAN.

It pass'd away,
And saw me not. Noon, and then thirst and famine;
And, with parch'd lips, I call'd on death, and sought
To wrench my limbs from the stiff cords that gnaw'd
Into the flesh, and drop into the deep;
And then methought I saw, beneath the clear
And crystal lymph, a dark, swift-moving thing,
With watchful glassy eyes,—the ocean-monster
That follows ships for prey. Then life once more
Grew sweet, and with a strain'd and horrent gaze,
And lifted hair, I floated on, till sense
Grew dim and dimlier, and a terrible sleep—
In which still—still—those livid eyes met mine—
Fell on me, and——

VIOLET.

Go on!

NORMAN.

I woke, and heard
My native tongue. Kind looks were bent upon me:
I lay on deck—escaped the ghastly death;
For God had watch'd the sleeper!

VIOLET (*half aside*).

My own Norman!

NORMAN.

'Twas a brave seaman, who with Raleigh served,
That own'd the ship. Beneath his fostering eyes
I fought and labour'd upward. At his death—
[A death, may such be mine!—a hero's death!—
The blue flag waving o'er the victory won!]—
He left me the sole heir to all his wealth,—
Some sacks of pistoles—his good frigate—and
His honest name! (*To* VIOLET.) Fair maid, the happiest deed
That decks my life *thou* knowest!

LADY ARUNDEL.

And the priest:
Hast thou not seen him since ye parted?

NORMAN.

No;
But two short days return'd to these dear shores.
(*Aside to* VIOLET.) Those eyes the guiding stars by which I steer'd.

[VIOLET *and* NORMAN *converse apart.*

LADY ARUNDEL (*gazing on them*).

He loves—yes, *there* my hope! Ha! Percy's voice!
I must beguile or blind *him.* One day more,
And all is safe. Fair Sir, anon I join you.

[*Exit.*

VIOLET.

And thou hast loved me thus?

NORMAN.

Thus, Violet; nay,—
For when had true love words for *all* its secrets?
In some sweet night, becalm'd upon the deep,
The blue air breathless in the starry peace,
After long silence, hush'd as heaven, but fill'd
With happy thoughts as heaven with angels, thou
Shalt lift thine eyes to mine, and with a glance
Learn how the lonely love!

VIOLET.

Not lonely, Norman:
Not lonely, henceforth: *I* shall be with thee!
Where'er thou goest, my soul is; and thy love
Has grown life's life. To see thee, hear thee, dream
Of thee when absent—to bear all—brave all—
By thy dear side;—*this* has become my nature—
Thy shadow, deepening as thy day declines,
And dying when thou settest.

NORMAN.

Heaven desert me
If by one cold look I should ever chill
The woman heart within thee!

VIOLET.

So, my Norman,
In cloud, or sunshine—labour as repose—
Meek tho' I be, and lowly,—thou shalt find
This courage of my sex, that bears all change
Save change in thee—and never breathes one murmur,
Unless it be a prayer to guard my Norman!

NORMAN.

My bride—my blessing—my adored!

Enter ASHDALE.

ASHDALE.

Gramercy!
I well escaped to meet my lady mother!
This tale of the old knight has fired my blood.
I would not see her in this mood—
(*turning and perceiving* VIOLET *and* NORMAN)
By heavens!
Whispering!—so close!—
(*approaching*) Familiar sir—excuse me:
I do not see the golden spurs of knighthood—

NORMAN (*aside*).

These landsmen, who would shake if the wind blew,
Are mighty quarrelsome. The golden spurs!

He thinks we ride on horseback thro' the seas!
Alas! we sailors have not so much gold
That we should waste it on our heels.

ASHDALE.

D'ye jest, sir?

VIOLET.

Oh cousin, fie!

ASHDALE (*mimicking her*).

Oh cousin, fie!—sir, mark me:
There's one too many present—

NORMAN (*aside*).

On my life
I think with him!—he might remove the objection!—

ASHDALE.

Good Master Norman, in the seneschal's hall
You'll find your equals.

NORMAN.

Haughty lord, not so.
He who calls me his equal first must prove
His arm as strong—his blade as keen—his heart
As calm in peril!—tush! put up thy sword.
He *not* my equal who insults his guest,
And seeks his safety in the eyes of woman.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

VIOLET.

Protect your guest from your rash son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Lord Ashdale—
These humours wrong your birth. To you, sir stranger,
Have I in aught so fail'd that in the son
You should rebuke the mother?

NORMAN.

Ask your son
If I was prompt to answer scorn by strife

ASHDALE.

Nay, it is true, more-prompt in taking licence
Than courting chastisement!

NORMAN.

You hear him, lady.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ashdale, be ruled—my best beloved—my child,
Forbear—you—

ASHDALE (*quickly*).

Learn'd in childhood from my mother
To brook no rival, and to fear no foe!
I am too old to alter now. Observe me:
You thwart my suit to Violet—you defend
This insolent stranger. Mother, take my counsel:
Despatch him hence and straight, or, by mine honour,
Blood will be shed.—Beware!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Blood! blood! whose blood?

ASHDALE.

Not mine—for noble knighthood is too holy
For varlet weapons!—not your son's—

LADY ARUNDEL.

My son's!

ASHDALE.

Look to it, mother!—We may meet again, sir.
Fie, mother! pale?—Beshrew me, but those eyes
Look fondly on the knave!

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

O, sharper than
The serpent's tooth!—

NORMAN.

Sweet hostess, do not fear me;
There is a something in your looks that melts
The manhood in me back to second childhood.
Let him rail on—he *is* your son, and safe
From the poor stranger's sword.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Go, Violet,—
No, stay—come back—I know thy secret, girl—
Thou lovest this Norman?

VIOLET.

Lady—I—he saved
My life and honour—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Joy!—oh, joy! retire
And trust in me—

[*Exit* VIOLET.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Now, sir—(*aside*) Alas! alas!
How like to his dead father!

NORMAN.

Speak—command,
And learn how thou canst move me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

I'm a mother!
I live but for this boy—heart, life, and soul,
Are interweaved with his!

NORMAN.

How sweet to hear
How mothers love their sons!

LADY ARUNDEL.

He is proud and fiery,
Quick to affront, slow to forgive. Nay, more:
Ashdale hath set his heart where thine is placed;
The air both breathe seems blood-red to my eyes.
Fly with her!—fly, this night!

NORMAN.

This night, with her?
Rapture! With Violet?

LADY ARUNDEL.

You consent?

NORMAN.

And yet
My birth untrack'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, lose not for a doubt
Your certain bliss;—and, heed me—I have wealth
To sharpen law, and power to ripen justice;—
I will explore the mazes of this mystery—
I—I will track your parents!

NORMAN.

Blessed lady!
What have I done, that thou shouldst care for Norman?
My parents!—find me one with eyes like thine,
And, were she lowliest of the hamlet born,
I would not change with monarchs.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Mighty Nature!
Why speak'st thou thus to him, yet dumb to me?
What is there in these haggard looks to charm thee,
Young stranger?

NORMAN.

Madam, when I gaze upon thee,
Methinks an angel's hand lifts up the veil
Of Time—the Great Magician; and I see
A face like thine bent o'er my infant couch,
And—pardon me—it is a vain, wild thought—
I know it is—but on my faith, I think
My mother was like thee!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Like me! ha, ha!
Most foolish thought. (*Aside*) I shall go mad with terror
If here he linger longer. Well, your ship
Is nigh at hand; you can embark to-night.

NORMAN.

So soon—so soon all mine!—In distant years,
Tho' *we* may meet no more—when thou, fair dame,
Hast lost ev'n memory of the stranger—o'er
The lonely deep, morning and night, shall rise
His prayer for thee.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Thou, thou!—a prayer for me?
Will Heaven record it? Nature rushes on me—
I cannot—I—forgive me; ere you part
We meet again, and—

[*Rushes out.*

NORMAN.

When I spoke of prayer
Her lip grew white. What is there in this woman
That half divides my thoughts with Violet's love?
Strange, while I muse, a chill and solemn awe
Creeps to my heart. Away, ye ill-timed omens!
Violet, at thy dear name the phantoms vanish,
And the glad Future breaks, a Fairy Isle,—
Thy voice its music, and thy smile its heaven!

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Gardens of the Castle—a different part from that in Act I.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Who would have thought the proud Countess would have been so pleased with the love of this wild Captain for my young lady? I think he must have given her some of the golden ointment too! But anything to thwart the suit of the young Lord. She expects him to marry no one less than a princess I suppose.

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

Ugh! ugh! Have you seen Lord Ashdale pass this way?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

No, your Worship!

SIR MAURICE (*caressingly*).

So this sea-Captain is making love to your pretty charge, Mistress Prudence! I suppose, between you and me, there will be a marriage in the family.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I am sure, Sir Maurice, I shall not say you nay.

SIR MAURICE.

Say me nay? I never offered thee anything.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

I thought you said "between you and me there was to be a marriage in the family." We might do a sillier thing, Sir Maurice. Better marry than do worse.

SIR MAURICE.

Worse!—Go and do your worst. I defy your seductions, you antiquated Dalilah. Hence; and if you chance on Lord Ashdale, say I would see him.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

If you should be serious, Sir Maurice, in your proposal—

SIR MAURICE.

Pish!—am I to be *your* jibe too?—[*Exit* MRS. PRUDENCE, *laughing*.] Every new slight I receive in this household I treasure up *here—here!*

Enter GAUSSEN.

Ha—so soon returned! hast thou seen the priest?—hast thou got the proofs?—hast thou—

GAUSSEN.

The priest left his house this morning an hour ere I arrived, in company with a stranger, who, from what I could learn, is a seaman: but the description does not suit the one we look after.

SIR MAURICE.

I see the lands of Arundel dropping from my gripe—but, no—no! if I miss the proofs, I will secure the claimant. Giles Gaussen, this day five-and-twenty

years ago, didst thou not commit a crime that, if told, would bring thee to the scaffold?—Go to!—unless this Norman die, the hemp is spun that will fit thee with a halter.

GAUSSEN.

I would I had the boy once more in my clutches. Think you I have forgiven him for this gash? Till then, the wenches (curse them!) did not mock at me—and—no matter! But what is he to the dead man? Thou told'st me it was his parents who paid me the gold to rid them of him.

SIR MAURICE.

Why, hark, I will tell thee—hush! what's that?—get aside—it is he himself—quick!—

[*They hide amidst the trees.*

Enter NORMAN *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

What, Norman, she consents?

NORMAN.

Yes, tremble not,
My best beloved.

VIOLET.

I tremble lest hereafter
Thou deem'st me over bold.

NORMAN.

Not bold, but trustful
As love is ever!—Nay, be soothed, and think

Of the bright lands within the western main,
Where we will build our home, what time the seas
Weary thy gaze;—there the broad palm-tree shades
The soft and delicate light of skies as fair
As those that slept on Eden;—Nature, there,
Like a gay spendthrift in his flush of youth,
Flings her whole treasure in the lap of Time.—
On turfs by fairies trod, the eternal Flora
Spreads all her blooms; and from a lake-like sea
Wooes to her odorous haunts the western wind!
While, circling round and upward from the boughs,
Golden with fruits that lure the joyous birds,
Melody, like a happy soul released,
Hangs in the air, and from invisible plumes
Shakes sweetness down!—

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ye have fix'd the hour and place
For flight—this night?

NORMAN.

Why, Lady, no; as yet
The blush upon her cheek at *thought* of flight
Lingers like dawn in heaven,—but like the dawn
The blush foretells the smile the heaven shall wear!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Trifle not—Ashdale is no dull-eyed rival;—
If he suspect—

NORMAN (*fiercely.*)

What then?

LADY ARUNDEL.

So hot! forget you
Your word to waive all contest?—No—that glance
Does answer "No."—And now, fair sir—this letter
To the Venetian goldsmith, Paolo Trezzi,
Yields you this lady's dower; for from these halls
Never went bride without her portion.

NORMAN.

Lady,
Ye who have dwelt upon the sordid land,
Amidst the everlasting gloomy war
Of Poverty with Wealth—ye cannot know
How we, the wild sons of the Ocean, mock
At men who fret out life with care for gold.
O! the fierce sickness of the soul—to see
Love bought and sold—and all the heaven-roof'd temple
Of God's great globe, the money-change of Mammon!
I dream of love, enduring faith, a heart
Mingled with mine—a deathless heritage
Which I can take unsullied to the stars,
When the Great Father calls his children home;—
And in the midst of this Elysian dream,
Lo, Gold—the demon Gold!—alas! the creeds
Of the false land!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

And once I thought like him!

Ah! happy Violet!—(*more coldly*) well—of this hereafter.
What hour can boat and boatmen wait your orders?

NORMAN.

The favouring moon breaks one hour ere the midnight.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Meet where the Castle chase, by the last gate,
Slopes to the ocean-beach—

NORMAN.

Ay—as I took
That path this morn, I saw the scathed ruins
Of an old chapel on the spot you name;—
Meet me there, Violet—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha—within that chapel!

NORMAN.

Is it not holy ground?

LADY ARUDNEL (*impatiently*).

Well, well—begone,
And meet one hour ere midnight—

VIOLET.

Let us wait
And hope, dear Norman—

LADY ARUNDEL.

" "Hope," girl! he must quit
These halls this day—would you his blood?—

VIOLET.

The love
I bear thee steals so little from the earth,
I cannot think it err because its faith
Will not nurse fear;—to-night, then—but, alas!
See the sky lowers—the nights are dark—

NORMAN.

Nay, then,
Streams o'er our path the Planet Saint of lovers:
And mark this white plume with the sparkling gem,
Pluck'd from the turban of the Algerine
That happy day—so thou shalt see the token
Gleam thro' the shadows.

VIOLET.

Yet—

NORMAN.

On board my bark
We boast a reverend priest—who shall attend
To consecrate our vows!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Come! to your chamber
I'll with thee and allay all fear; hark! steps!
Go, sir—let Ashdale find thee not!—remember
Thy word; and so farewell and prosper.

NORMAN.

Ah!

Shall *we* not meet again?—God's blessing on thee!
Wilt *thou* not bless me too?

(*Kissing her hand.*)

LADY ASHDALE.

I!—Heaven will bless thee.

(*Pressing his hand convulsively.*)

[*Exeunt* LADY ASHDALE *and* VIOLET.

NORMAN.

Now could I linger here whole hours; and dream—
Of what?—well, Falkner has return'd ere this.

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

A cavalier, arrived in haste, demands
An audience, sir.

NORMAN.

Of me?

SERVANT.

Upon the instant.
He bade me name him "Falkner."

NORMAN.

Falkner! Ever
Ready in need—admit him: sure true Friendship
Is a magician—and foretels our wishes.

Enter FALKNER.

Welcome, thrice welcome. Listen to me—bid
Our boat attend me on the beach below,

Close by a ruin'd chapel—where the sea
Washes the forest's farthest verge—one hour
Before night's last: our chaplain too is needed.
See to it—quick!—away!

FALKNER.

Piano, friend—
As the Italians phrase it—slow and sure.
I've famous news;—the priest I sought and found,
And left him near these halls. He has the proofs
(And will reveal them) of thy birth—thy name.
Well; art thou dumb?

NORMAN.

O Heavens! for this one day
Thou mak'st life bankrupt in its blessings!—He?
Onslow—art sure?—

FALKNER.

Some men may know their names,
Tho' *you* do not. He *told* me *his* was Onslow.

NORMAN.

Where shall I seek him?

FALKNER.

By the very chapel
Thou spok'st of!—

NORMAN.

Is this destiny?

FALKNER.

And wouldst thou
Have me still see thine orders—

NORMAN.

To the letter.
The boat—the chaplain—send to the ship and bid it
Veer round—in sight of the beach—before the hour.

FALKNER.

Explain—

NORMAN.

No time for words, dear Falkner—go!
[*Exit* FALKNER.

Enter MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

Sir Maurice!—Where's Sir Maurice?—Have you seen Sir Maurice here?

NORMAN.

A fico for Sir Maurice!
Ah! Mistress Prudence, when we meet again,
Poor Captain Norman may be Captain Crœsus!
Oh, Violet! birth and wealth were sweet indeed,
If they could make me worthier to possess thee.
[*Exit.*

[SIR MAURICE *comes forth.*

MISTRESS PRUDENCE

Where have you hid yourself, sir?

SIR MAURICE.

Hid myself!
Am I a man to hide myself?

MISTRESS PRUDENCE.

The Countess
Requires your presence on the instant; I
Said you were—Ah, she comes.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE (*to* GAUSSEN, *who is stealing out*).

Keep close—keep close!

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Dost thou not dread to look upon me?—What!
I gave thee gold—gold to thy heart's content—
To waft young Arthur to a distant land;—
Gold for his future lot—not bribes for murder!
Sold to the pirate!—cast on the wild seas!
O traitor!—traitor!

SIR MAURICE.

I knew nought of this.
Hush!—hush!—Speak low! He I employed the traitor,
Not your poor trusty knight;—but mark me, cousin;
Not then your danger half so dark as now.
Time flies the while I speak.—Thou scarce wert gone
When came a stranger with such news!—Old Onslow
At hand—he has the proofs!—I—I can save thee,
And I alone!—Who is the traitor now?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Terror on terror crowds upon me, like
Waters above a drowning wretch!

SIR MAURICE.

Be quick!
And, hark! I must bribe high!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Get me the proofs,
Silence the priest, and whatsoe'er thou ask'st
Is thine.

SIR MAURICE.

The farms and manor-house of Bothleigh—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Thine—thine!

SIR MAURICE.

Agreed!—now go in peace and safety—
Leave me to work.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy! for thy sake—
For thy sake this—not mine—bear witness, Heaven!
I will go pray.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, pray! when weak bad women
Gorge some huge crime, they always after it
Nibble a bit of prayer, just to digest it!

So gluttons cram a hecatomb of meat,
And then correct it with a crumb of cheese.
Come from thy lair, my jackal of the sea.

[GAUSSEN *comes forth.*

Fly to the chapel. Ah, thou know'st those ruins!—
Swoop on the grey-hair'd man thou findest there:
Seize, and conceal, and gag him in some cave.
Tear from him all—papers and parchments—all!
Bring them to me—a thousand bright broad pieces.—
The seaman took the longer path;—this way—
You see the track, it halves the distance.

GAUSSEN.

If
He struggle, must I—

SIR MAURICE.

Prate thou not of struggles;
I give thee orders but to seize the papers.
Fail, and thou know'st I have thy secret!—Win,
And thou art rich for life—away!

[*Exit* GAUSSEN.

At worst
I am a thousand pounds a-year the warmer;
At best—why, that's to come. I know a tame,
Patient, poor cousin—Gods, how I will plague him!

As he goes out enter LORD ASHDALE.

Hadst thou come sooner, thou hadst spoil'd a love-scene.

ASHDALE.

Wert thou its witness, then?

SIR MAURICE.

Ay, in the corner,
Like peeping Tom. You've been at Coventry?

ASHDALE.

Jest not—thou madden'st me.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou'lt swear to keep
Our counsel from thy mother?

ASHDALE.

By my honour.

SIR MAURICE.

They fly this night—they meet one hour ere midnight
By the old chapel. Boat and priest await—
She'll know him by the jewel in his plume:
Put one in thine—I'll sell thee one a bargain.

ASHDALE.

This night! the chapel! Oh, by earth and heaven,
I will not lose this girl! I thank thee, Knight.

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Both flies are in the web! I know a spider
Who shall *eat* both. When shall I wake an earl?

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

In the background a Gothic chapel partially in ruins; —through a broken arch the sea seen at a little distance. In front, broken forest-ground, a small brook running to the sea. At the side, a small tower that admits to the demesnes of the Castle. Sunset.

ONSLOW (*in front of the chapel*).

More than ten years have pass'd since I beheld him—
The noble boy;—now time annuls my oath,
And cancels all his wrongs! Ye dismal wrecks—
Well might the lightning scathe your bloodstain'd walls,
To death and marriage consecrate alike,
As is the tale that trembles on my lips!
Lo, the toad battening where the altar stood,
But ruin spares the tomb! So thro' the earth
How many altars vow'd to human love
A single tomb outlasts!

Enter GAUSSEN *from the tower.*

GAUSSEN.

What, in time?
Alone, too?

[*Rushing upon* ONSLOW.

Speak not, stir not, or thou diest!
The scrolls—the papers that thou bear'st about thee!

ONSLOW.

Avaunt, I know thee, murderer! On this spot
The dead rise up against thee.

GAUSSEN.

Dost thou know me?
Then know thy doom and doomsman!

ONSLOW.

Villain! off!

[*Breaks from him and passes through the arches of the chapel.*

GAUSSEN (*following*).

Thy blood on thine own head!

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

A human cry!
Ha! ruffian,—hold!

[*Rushes through the arches.*

Re-enter GAUSSEN *disarmed.*

GAUSSEN.

Disarm'd! my hand is palsied!

[NORMAN *appears as in pursuit*—GAUSSEN, *creeping along the ruins, enters the tower unperceived.*

NORMAN.

Is it a fiend, that earth should swallow?

ONSLOW (*within, groaning*).

Oh!

[NORMAN *re-enters the Chapel.*

GAUSSEN (*from the tower*).

We meet again!—

Enter NORMAN, *bearing* ONSLOW, *wounded.*

ONSLOW.

Ah! life is fading fast!—
Let me look on thee—once more I behold thee,
And can depart in peace!—

NORMAN.

Hush—do not speak!—

ONSLOW.

Nay, words grow few. I bade thee meet me here;
Yonder where Murder found me—on this day
Twenty and five years back—thy father—

NORMAN.

Father!
Say on! my father?

ONSLOW.

Died, most foully murder'd

NORMAN.

Blood—blood for blood—the murderer—name him!

ONSLOW.

Listen.—
There was a page, fair, gentle, brave, but lowborn;—
The daughter of the lordly House he served
Saw him and loved:—they wed in stealth;—these hands
Join'd them together in yon holy walls;
They met in secret. I—I—my voice fails me!
[NORMAN *goes to the brook, brings water in the hollow of his hand, and sprinkles the face of the old man.*

ONSLOW.

The father learn'd the love—not wedlock—deem'd
His child dishonour'd.—On this spot the lovers
Met, with design to fly. I loved the youth—
His foster-sire—I was to share their flight.—

NORMAN.

Speak on—speak on.

ONSLOW.

'Twas night—a fearful night—
Lightning and storm!—They met—and murderous hands
Seized on thy father—dragg'd him from her breast!—
Oh!—that wild shriek—I hear it still!—he died
By the same wretch that is my murderer now.

NORMAN.

Thy murderer now? O thanks, revealing Heaven!
One death, one deed—one arm avenges both!

ONSLOW.

Died in these arms—three flagstones from the altar—
Near the lone tomb where the first Baron sleeps;—
Still mark the gore-stains where his bones are buried.

NORMAN.

Oh!—horror—horror!

ONSLOW.

Three nights thence thy mother
Gave birth to thee;—a kinsman, whose cold heart
Promise of gold had soften'd to her grief,
Bore to my home the babe!

NORMAN.

And she, my mother?
Does she live still?—my mother?

ONSLOW.

She survived—
Forced to a lordlier husband's arms. The tale
Of the sad past unknown!

NORMAN.

It *was* her face
Mine infant eyes beheld?—

ONSLOW.

In stealth a wife;
In stealth a mother—yes!—But with new ties
Came new affections.—To the second nuptials
A second son was born.—She loved him well;
Better than thee—than her own soul.

NORMAN.

Poor mother!—

ONSLOW.

But few words more.—I—I—Oh—

NORMAN.

Breathe less loud,
My soul is in my ears.

ONSLOW.

Too moved by pity—
Too sway'd by fear—lest they should rend thee from me,

I took a solemn oath to veil the secret—
Conceal thy rights—while lived her sire, and he,
Her second lord; and thus allow'd thy youth
To quit my roof:—they died,—the sire and husband,—
Some two years since;—thou still afar. I sought
Thy mother, and her heart was marble;—Oh!
Here—here (*gives papers*). Go, seek thy shelter in the law;
But shun yon towers!—thy mother—

NORMAN.

But one word!
My mother's name!—

ONSLOW (*pointing to papers*).

There!

[*Raises himself to his feet with a sudden effort.*

Hear my last words, Heaven!
Protect the wrong'd!—upon this head I lay
An old man's blessing—Now, farewell!

[*Dies.*

NORMAN.

Stay—stay
Thy flight, thou gentlest spirit! Dumb! He breathes not!
Dead—dead—my second sire! O hell-born deed!
Could not these white hairs plead for thee?
—Revenge!
Earth give no shelter to the man of blood!
Conduct his feet, Ordainer of all doom,
To retributive slaughter; and vouchsafe

This arm thine instrument! Mine eyes deceived me,
Or the red beam, streaking the vaulted gloom,
Show'd me the face of——Well! the Heavens are just,
AND WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!—Farewell, farewell!
Heaven gains a saint in thee!—My mother lives!
What tho' she has another child to love?
Is not a mother's heart a mighty space,
Embracing all her children? Of that realm
How little will content me!—She will fold
Her arms around me, and from out her breast
The eyes that look to hers shall melt away
With passionate tears the past and all its sorrows!
[*Opening the papers.*
What—what! her son—her son! Mysterious Nature,
At the first glance I loved her! Wealth, lands, titles,
A name that glitters, like a star, amidst
The galaxy of England's loftiest born!
O Violet—O my bride—and O my mother!
Out from my heart henceforth each low desire,
Each meaner hope my wilder youth conceived!
Be my soul instinct with such glorious thoughts
As, springing to great deeds, shall leave my land
A bright heroic lesson of the things
In which true nobleness endures for ever!
And while I told my woes she wept, she did!
'Tis her sweet writing! bless her! See, she calls me
Arthur, and child, and child, her precious one,
Her hope, her darling! Mother—my own mother!

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

The hall in the Castle of Arundel.—Night—lights.

SIR MAURICE—GAUSSEN.

SIR MAURICE.

Thou hast not got the papers; and thou hast committed a murder; and, what is worse, thou hast slain the wrong man!

GAUSSEN.

But——

SIR MAURICE.

But me no buts: thou hast ruined me. Stand back, and let me think. (*Aside.*) The heir has the proofs—clear! He will not come back to this house, the very den of his unnatural foe—clear! He will seek the law for redress—clear, clear! But he loves Violet. He will keep his assignation; carry away the girl; and then off to London, to assert his rights:—all this is clear as noon-day! Gaussen, thou canst repair all. The sea-captain will be at the ruins to-night—eleven of the clock—to be married in the chapel by stealth.

GAUSSEN.

I overheard all that in the gardens (*aside*—and more too perhaps), and am already prepared. My bold fellows shall seize priest and boatmen, and I will await the bridegroom.

SIR MAURICE.

And that thy cutlass may not fail thee this time, I will brace thy hand by refreshing thy memory. Five-and-twenty years ago—thou then but a young fellow, caught in thy first desperate piracy on the high seas—wert placed in the dungeons of this castle, in order to be marched off the next day to the county gaol, with a rope for thy journey's end. Thou wert released that night: at day-break thou wert on the merry waves again, with a sack of pistoles in thy pouch. What was the price of thy life and liberty?

GAUSSEN.

The blood of a man whom the stern old Lord bade me strike as his worst foe.

SIR MAURICE.

Right! and the son of that man is the boy thou didst cast on the seas! Thou sayest that Onslow recognised thee. Be sure the dying man told the son in what face to look for his father's murderer. If thou make not sure work to-night, thou art meat for the crows!

GAUSSEN.

Trust me. I will fasten to him as a panther on the stag!

SIR MAURICE.

And—stand back!—let me think!—let me think! I see it!—I see! Thou shalt not only do the deed, but thou shalt find another to bear the blame! This crack-brain, Ashdale, the young Lord, will be on the spot. He

loves the girl Norman would wed; they will have words, perhaps blows. Be on the watch with thy fellows—ten, twenty of them: rush in, under pretence of separating—stab—stab both! Dead men tell no tales: and ye and your men can bear witness that they fell by each other's hands!

GAUSSEN.

'Tis a death more than I bargained for. The price?

SIR MAURICE.

Shall be doubled—two thousand pieces!

GAUSSEN.

Touch hands. Bring five hundred to-night—by the old chapel—for my men. I will come for the rest to thine own house to-morrow eve at dusk.

SIR MAURICE.

Five hundred to-night! Five hundred, Bully Gaussen, beforehand! Premiums are an abomination in law—usury, rank usury!

GAUSSEN.

I must have them: my men want pay, and are half mutinous as it is. Blood and wounds, old knight! this is sharp work you set them at—to net a covy of sailors, who will fight like devils, and to stab a lord—to say nothing of the other man—that's my quarrel—five hundred pieces, or I hoist sail, and you may catch the sailors and stab the Lord for yourself.

SIR MAURICE (*groaning*).

Five hundred little, pretty, smiling, golden-faced

cherubim: 'tis a second Massacre of the Innocents! Well, thou shalt have them (*aside*—and the Countess must repay me). Before eleven I will be with thee: but you will smite both—both the Lord and the Captain: no time for death-bed explanations.

GAUSSEN.

They shall never hear the bell toll midnight!

[*Exit.*

SIR MAURICE.

Then, ere matins, I shall be Baron Ashdale and heir of Arundel. The lordship and lands of Ashdale are so settled that they go at once to the male heir. Yes, I can trust this man to do the deed! but can I trust him after it? A pretty acquaintance Giles Gaussen for a great lord!—Well, time enough to be rid of him.

ASHDALE (*speaking without*).

Yes—the dun and sorrell.

Enter LORD ASHDALE.

SIR MAURICE.

Hast thou prepared thy plans, my Hotspur?—

ASHDALE.

Yes;

My steeds and grooms will wait me in the forest:
And, for the rest,—I wear my father's sword.

SIR MAURICE.

Oh, I could hug thee! By my golden spurs,
I doat on valour!—Thou wilt win the maid,

I know thou wilt.—Faith, how a frown becomes thee!
Yet he's no carpet warrior—thou must use
All thy address!—

ASHDALE.

Thou need'st not urge me to it.

SIR MAURICE.

Good night, and luck to thee. (*Aside.*) Now, now I have him!
I feel myself a lord already!—lights there!

Enter Servant.

Light me, good knave; there is a pistole for thee.
(*Aside*) A great man should be generous.—'Bye, my Hector (*hums a tune*).
Is my state-coach below?—Oh, I forgot. [*Exit.*

LORD ASHDALE (*looking after him in great surprise*).

Touch'd, crazed!—the old knight has so starved his body,
The brains have taken fright, and given him warning.
Ha, ha! adventure is the gale to love;
And stratagem the salt of its tide! ha, ha!
I think I never loved this maid so well
As now, 'twixt fear of loss and hope of triumph.

Enter LADY ARUNDEL.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy—

ASHDALE.

Well, madam, I am press'd—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, Percy!
Speak kindly, Percy!

ASHDALE.

Mother, if my mood
Be chafed to-day, forgive it!—shall I speak?
Your sudden care for this ignoble stranger,
Coupled with memory of wild words your lips
Oftimes let fall—your penances and fasts—
Your midnight vigils—your habitual gloom;—
Weaving all this, to form a likelihood,
Why, harsher judgment than your son's, my mother,
Might half suspect—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Speak on, sir—

ASHDALE.

That your past
Was darken'd by some unatoned-for sin,
Whose veil this stranger's hand had lifted.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy,
Your words are daggers—if the unstrung brain
At times gives discord—if the insane phantoms
That haunt all hearts vex'd by the storms of life—
(And *I* have suffer'd, Percy, sadly suffer'd)—
Do mock and gibber in my dreary path—
'Tis thine to pity, to forbear, to soothe,
Never to doubt. Where should that angel men

Call "CHARITY" abide—but in the hearts
Of our own children?

ASHDALE.

Mother—oh, forgive me!
If the unquiet, cavilling spirit born
Within me, of the race that, like the ermine,
Would pine to death when sullied by one stain,
Makes me seem harsh—forgive me!

LADY ARUNDEL (*approaching him*).

Never know
Till I am dead how deeply I have loved thee!
Thy father—tho' an earl in rank—and near
To the royal house in blood and martial fame—
Had wed before—had other sons—on *me*
Alone depends thy heritage—from me
Thy lordship and thy fortunes.

ASHDALE.

True, what then?

LADY ARUNDEL.

You have loved pomp and state; and I have pinch'd
To feed the lavish wants of your wild youth—
Have I not, Percy?

ASHDALE.

You have been to me
Ever most bounteous, mother.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Yet, in truth,
You prize too much the outward show of things.

Could you not bear—for you have youth and health,
Beauty and strength—the golden wealth of Nature:—
Could you not bear descent from that vain height
Of fortune, where poor Vanity builds towers
The heart inhabits not—to live less proud—
To feast less gorgeously—to curb thy wants
Within the state—not of the heir to earls,
But of a simple gentleman, whose station
Lies in his worth and valour?—Could you?

ASHDALE.

Never!
Such as I am, my sire and you have made me,—
Ambitious, haughty, prodigal!—my hopes
A part of my very life! If I could fall
From my high state, it were as Romans fell—
On their sword's point. Why is your cheek so hueless?
Why daunt yourself with air-drawn phantasies?
Who can deprive me of mine heritage?
The titles of the antique seignory—
That will be mine, in trust for sons unborn,
When time (from this day may the date be far!)
Transfers the ancestral coronal that gems
Thy stately brows to no unworthy heir?

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

My proud soul speaks in his, my lion boy!
Come shame—come crime—come death and doom hereafter—
I'll know no son but him!

Enter Servant.

SERVANT.

Most honour'd madam,
The cavalier you entertained this morning
Is here.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I will not see him!

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

Gracious lady!
My business—grant me but your private ear—
Will plead for my intrusion.

LADY ARUNDEL (*aside*).

All else fails!
My own stern heart support me!

NORMAN (*aside*).

How like strangers
They look upon me, both, the while I yearn
To rush into their arms!

ASHDALE.

Why parley with him?
Who is he?—What?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Hush!—I attend you, sir;
Be seated—Ashdale, leave us.

[NORMAN *places his cloak and hat on a table and draws a seat near to* LADY ARUNDEL.

ASHDALE (*carelessly*).

By my troth,
I have no wish to mar good company.
Fair sir, I owe you back disdainful words
Repaid you later.

NORMAN (*aside*).

I love that warm spirit!—
'Twas mine at *his* age—my dear brother!

ASHDALE (*going to the table and exchanging the cloak and hat*).

Ho!
The signal plume—a fair exchange,—so please you,
The cloak too. Tarry now as long as lists you;
I'll be your likeness elsewhere.

[*Exit.*

NORMAN.

How to break it—
And not to give overwrought joy the shock
Of grief—

LADY ARUNDEL.

I listen, sir.

NORMAN (*with great emotion*).

You love your son?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Better than life, I love him!

NORMAN.

Have you not
Another son—a first-born?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir!

NORMAN.

A son
On whom those eyes dwelt first, whose infant cry
Struck first on that divine and holy chord,
In the deep heart of woman, which awakes
All nature's tenderest music? Turn not from me.
I know the secret of thy mournful life.
Will it displease thee—will it—to believe
That son is living still?

LADY ARUNDEL.

How, sir—such licence?
I will not brook it!

[*Rises to go.*

NORMAN.

No, thou wilt not leave me!
I say, thou wilt not leave me! On my knees,
I say thou *shalt* not leave me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Loose thine hold,
Or I will call my menials, to chastise
This most unmanner'd freedom!

NORMAN.

Mother, mother!
I am thy son—thine Arthur—thine own child!
Do you deny your own?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I have no son,
Save Percy Ashdale!

NORMAN.

Do not—do not hear her,
Thou everlasting and all-righteous Judge!
Thou, who, amidst the seraph hosts of heaven,
Dost take no holier name than that of "Father!"
Hush, hush! Behold these proofs—the deed of marriage!
The attesting oaths of them who witness'd, and
Of him who sanctified, thy nuptial vow!
Behold these letters!—see, the words are still
By years unfaded!—to my sire, your lover!
Read how you loved him then. By all that love—
Yea, by himself, the wrong'd and murder'd one,
Who hears thee now above—by these, my mother,
Do not reject thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

The worst is past.
(*Re-seats herself.*
And were this so—own that I had a son—
What proof that you are he?

NORMAN.

What proof? There, there!
In your own heart—your eyes—that dare not face me;

Your trembling limbs—there—there my witness! Nature
Blanches your cheek, and heaves your struggling breast!
Thou know'st I am thy son!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, while he speaks,
My courage melts away! And yet, my Percy,
My son, whose years blossom'd beneath my eyes—
All *his* hopes blasted! No, no!

NORMAN.

See—you falter!
Ah——

LADY ARUNDEL.

Sir, if you, a stranger till this day,
Have, by suborning most unworthy spies,
Glean'd from the tragic tale of my gone life
Some hints to build this wild and monstrous fable,
Go, seek the laws to weave them into shape
More cunning and less airy. Quit my presence!

NORMAN.

I will not!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Will not? Ho, there!

NORMAN.

Call your hirelings;
And let them hear me!
[*Goes to the hearth.*
In these halls—upon
The sacred hearth-stone of my sires—beneath

Their knightly scutcheon—and before their forms,
Which, from the ghostly canvass, I invoke
To hail their son—I take my stand! I claim
My rights! They come—your menials! bid them thrust
From his own hearth the heir of Arundel!

Enter Servants.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Seize on!—No! no!—My father's lordly mien
Is his! *I dare not!*

FIRST SERVANT.

Did you summon us,
My gracious lady?

NORMAN.

Yes! she summon'd! Now,
Lady of Arundel, your mandates!

LADY ARUNDEL (*sinking into a seat*).

Leave us;
We do not need you now!

[*Exeunt* Servants.

LADY ARUNDEL (*rising, and hastily approaching*).

Oh, Arthur!—son!—
If so you be—have mercy!

NORMAN.

Do not kneel—
No, do not kneel—that, *my* place!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Listen to me.
Grant that you are my son—the unhappy pledge
Of a most mournful nuptials :—grant that I,
Scarce on the verge when child-born fancy glides
Into the dreaming youth, misplaced my heart—
Forgot the duties which the noble owe
The past and future :—that a deed was done
Which, told, would blacken with a murderer's crime
My father's memory—stain *thy* mother's name—
Bid the hot blush, rank in the vulgar eye,
Blister my cheek, and gnaw into my heart :—
Grant this—and you, my son! will you return
The life I gave, for that, more vile than death,
The everlasting shame? NOW, SPEAK!

NORMAN.

Go on!
Go on! I cannot speak!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Heaven witness for me,
With what reluctant and remorseful soul,
After what threats endured and horrors done,
I yielded to my ruthless father's will,
And with false lips profaned a second vow!
I had a child! I was a mother! true:
But did I dare to dwell upon that thought?
In darkness and in secret—if I sought
The couch it hallow'd—did not my steps creep
Fearful and shuddering as the tread of crime,

Which starts at its own shadow? With that son
Were woven, not the proud, self-glorying joys
Which mothers know; but memory, shame, the dread
And agony of those who live between
Evil and its detection. Yet I loved thee—
I loved thee once!

NORMAN.

I knew it—Heaven, I knew it!

LADY ARUNDEL.

I loved thee till another son was born—
One who, amidst the sad and desolate world,
Seem'd sent from Heaven by Mercy. Think, thou wert
Alien—afar—seen rarely—on strange love
Leaning for life;—but this thrice-precious one
Smiled to my eyes—drew being from my breast—
Slept in my arms;—the very tears I shed
Above my treasure were to men and angels
Alike such holy sweetness!—food, health, life,
It clung to me for all!—mother and child,
Each was the all to each!

NORMAN.

I am not jealous—
I weep with thee, my mother—see, I weep!
Oh, so much love, and has it nought to spare?

LADY ARUNDEL.

My boy grew up—my Percy. Looking on him,
Men prized his mother more. So fair and stately,

And the world deem'd to such bright hopes the heir.
I did not love thee *then*—for, like a cloud,
Thy dark thought hung between him and the future.
And so—

NORMAN.

Thou didst not—O the unnatural horror!—
Thou didst not—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Doom thee to the pirate?—No,
No—not so ruthless, Arthur. But design'd
To rear thee up in ignorance of thy rights—
A crime—'tis punish'd. So, my tale is done.
Reclaim thy rights—on me and on my son
Avenge thy father's wrongs and thine;—I ask not
Mercy from thee—and from the hated earth
I pass for ever to the tomb, which hath
Even for shame a shelter!

NORMAN.

Oh, my mother!
You do not know the heart your words have pierced!
I—I—thy son—thine Arthur—*I* avenge?
Never on thee. Live happy—love my brother—
Forget that I was born. Here, here—these proofs—
These—these (*giving the papers*). Oh, see you where
the words are blister'd
With my hot tears? I wept—it was for joy:
I did not think of lands, of name, of birthright—
I did but think these arms should clasp a mother!
Now they are worthless—take them—you can deem not

How in my orphan youth my lonely heart
Pined for the love you will not give me!—Mother,
Put but thine arms around me—let me feel
Thy kisses on my brow;—but once—but once!
Let me remember in the years to come
That I have lived to say "A mother bless'd me!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, could I speak—could I embrace him—all
My heart would gush forth in one passionate burst,
And I should bid him stay; and—Percy, Percy,
My love for thee has made me less than human!

NORMAN.

She turns away—she will not bless the outcast!
She trembles with a fear that I should shame her!
Farewell—farewell for ever! Peace be with thee—
Heaven soothe thy griefs, and make the happy son
Thou lovest so well the source of every solace.
For me (since it will please thee so to deem),
Think I am in my grave!—for never more,
Save in thy dreams, shalt thou behold me!—Mother,
For the last time I call thee so!—I—I
Cannot speak more—I—

[*Rushes from the room.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Arthur! O, my son!
Come back, come back, my son!—my blessed son!

[*Falls by the threshold.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Hall in the Castle of Arundel, as in the last Scene.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Gone—gone!—and here he stood, and bless'd the mother
Who did not bless her son!—Ah, Heaven forgive me!
These are the deeds in which I placed my safety,
Now won and worthless!—Oh, how human hearts
Do feed on fire, till, when the flame is slaked
Ashes alone are left!

Enter SIR MAURICE.—(*Lady Arundel conceals the papers.*)

SIR MAURICE.

Well, cousin, fear not:
All is arranged.—Ere cockcrow thou shalt be
Free of thy terrors!—old Sir Maurice still
Is good for something, eh?

LADY ARUNDEL.

What guilty thought
Speaks in thy ominous smile?

SIR MAURICE.

If thus you wrong me
I'm mute;—and yet thou know'st I live to serve thee.

I can secure thee all—glad days—calm nights:
But in this world there are such covetous knaves,
That, la you now,—I am ashamed to tell thee—
The rogue I have hired wants two thousand pieces
This very night to—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Silence!—I abhor
Thy crooked counsels—thy rapacious guile:—
I've been too long benighted, and pursued
Meteors for guides! Now the cloud rolls away,
And on my terror breaks the morning star.
I'll nought of thee!

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt not!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Miser, no!
Thy black and hideous guilt, out-darkening mine,
Had well nigh drowned my soul beneath a sea
Deeper than that to which thy trait'rous craft
Consign'd my first-born! Quit these halls for ever,
And starve beside the chests whose every coin
At the Last Day shall in the Court of Heaven
Witness against thee, Judas!

SIR MAURICE.

Miser! Judas!
I thank thee—no, to-morrow I will thank thee.
This crowns the cup of insult! You and yours,
Your dull-soul'd father, and your lowborn lover—

Your coxcomb son—your veriest varlet, down
To the gross scullion, fattening on your offal—
All—all have broke their idiot jests on me—
Me, but for you, the Lord of Arundel!
Yet all, at need, could fawn on old Sir Maurice—
Eke from his wits their poverty of brain—
And——plague upon this wrath!—thou art not worth it
I leave these halls. When next we meet, proud dame,
Thy crest may be less lofty! Miser! Judas!

[*Exit.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

There's meaning in this frontless insolence:
"When next we meet," said he; "When next we meet!"
Broods he some new and deadlier mischief?—Ha!
Time wanes—Within there!—

Enter Servant.

What's the hour?

SERVANT.

The chime
Just told the quarter, Madam!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ah! so late?
Where is my son, Lord Ashdale?

SERVANT.

Left the castle
Some minutes since: his grooms and steeds preceded.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Whither?—

SERVANT.

I know not, madam, but he bade me
Say, that he might return not ere the morning.

LADY ARUNDEL.

The morning!—now the danger glares upon me.
He has whisper'd Percy of the lovers' flight;
And they will meet—the brothers—meet as foes!
Quick—torches—quick—let every menial arm!
Quick—follow—lights here!—Heaven avert this woe—
Forgive the mother—Save, oh, save the sons!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The exterior of a ruined Chapel—the Tower of the Chapel, with large Gothic doors, for the background.

Night—the stage darkened.

GAUSSEN *and* Two Pirates.

GAUSSEN.

All our men posted?—

1ST PIRATE.

Ay, my Captain;—Luke,

With ten stout fellows, hid beneath the rock,
Will seize the boatmen when they run ashore.

GAUSSEN.

Good.

Enter LUKE.

LUKE.

We have nabb'd the rogues—four sailors and
A jolly chaplain—only one, their leader,
Cut his way through, and fled!

GAUSSEN.

A murrain on him!
It matters not—all done ere he can peach!

Enter SIR MAURICE.

SIR MAURICE.

That woman's taunts put me beside my temper;
But I am on the threshold of my greatness.
Sir Maurice Beevor shall be merged to-morrow
Into Lord Ashdale;—like a drop of water
Into a glass of aqua vitæ.

GAUSSEN.

Well, Knight!
You have the monies?

SIR MAURICE (*giving a bag*).

Little dears! you see them
Tuck'd up in bed and fast asleep—my heart aches

That such a happy and united family
Should be dispersed upon the world, and never
Come home again!—Poor things!—Now, prithee man,
Don't be so rough with them!—

GAUSSEN.

Since last we met
My scouts inform me that the dogs of law
Are on my track.—'Twere best when all is done
To put to sea.

SIR MAURICE.

Right, right.

GAUSSEN.

So bring the rest
Of the gold to-night;—one half-hour hence I reckon
My part o' the compact will be sign'd and seal'd.

SIR MAURICE.

So soon?—'Gad how impatient, fierce, and fiery
My monies make him! Well, it shall be so;
I'll bring the rest—

GAUSSEN.

Stay; when I've slain this Norman,
The papers on him—

SIR MAURICE.

Thou wilt give to me—
'Tis in the bargain.

GAUSSEN.

What, Knight, if I took them
To the great Countess, yonder?—

SIR MAURICE.

To the countess,
Villain!—I would—I would—(How black he looks!
I'd best be civil)—I would think it, Giles,
Not quite the conduct that becomes an honest,
Kind-hearted friend, like you.—

GAUSSEN.

(*Aside*) As I suspected:
The Dame of Arundel's concerned in this.
I'll see what's in these papers ere I give them
To the old hunks. (*Aloud*) You may depend upon me—
Bring but the gold in time. Good night.

SIR MAURICE.

I' faith,
The pleasantest thing the rogue has said.—Good night!
Look sharp! remember both must be despatch'd.
A thousand each!—What shall I be to-morrow?
[*Exit.*

GAUSSEN.

Both!—baugh! what feud have I with the young Lord,
That he should die to please thee?—*Each* a thousand!
Why, when thou bring'st two thousand to my lair,
Think'st thou one thousand shall go back again?
The Lord shall live:—but for the other—he
Who set this mark upon my brow—the son
Of the dead man—one blow wipes off old scores,
And saves new debts. None but myself must know
What worth there may be in those papers!—Yet

The lad is cunning with his weapon.—Well,
He shall not draw it!—So,—an ambush!—Luke,
Lend me thy cutlass,—I lost mine to-day,
And will not trust to my knife alone—the lanthorn!—
Watch for the gallant with the sparkling plume
And snow-white cloak, a damsel on his arm;—
Tell him the priest awaits him in the chapel,
His boatmen in the creek below—and vanish,
That message said. Keep i' the dark, nor let him
Note a strange face—thy hat and cloak good mufflers

LUKE.

I'm an old hand—ne'er fear!

GAUSSEN.

And if another,
Of gayer dress, the young Lord, come this way,
Do *him* no harm—but seize; his life will be
Well worth the ransoming. Now for this scar
Will I have vengeance—where the father fell
Shall the son bleed.

[*Exit within the chapel.*

LUKE.

Old Mother Moon is lazy,
Still in her nightcap!—Dark and hush'd; but men
Who live 'twixt knife and halter have sharp senses—
The owl's eye and the hare's ear. Hist!—what's that?
A hinge creaks yonder—ah! a footfall!

Enter LORD ASHDALE (*in* NORMAN'S *hat and cloak*) *and* VIOLET.

VIOLET.

Speak!
The silence and the darkness chill me.

ASHDALE.

Dearest,
No cause for fear!

VIOLET.

Thy voice sounds sharp and strange.
Ah, my heart fails me!

ASHDALE (*aside*).

Yet, I'd swear her Norman
Would have said just what I did.

LUKE.

In the chapel
The priest awaits—your boatmen in the creek
Behind yon rock.

ASHDALE.

Aha! the priest—stay, fellow,—
The priest—the chapel?—marriage, eh?

LUKE.

What else, sir?

ASHDALE.

What light in the chapel?

LUKE.

Only a dark lanthorn.

[*Exit.*

ASHDALE.

All favours—this is luckier than I hoped for!
I see!—the marriage first—then flight! Decorous!
Sweet one, within!—hush!—come!

VIOLET.

Mine ear does mock me;
But terror plays sad tricks with the senses! Norman,
My frame may tremble, but my heart is brave—
For *that* can never doubt thee.

[*Exeunt* ASHDALE *and* VIOLET *through the doors of the chapel.*

Enter FALKNER (*his sword drawn*).

FALKNER (*in a whisper*).

Norman!—Captain!
I dare not call aloud.—None here?—these rascals—
Have they laid hands on Norman, too? Who comes?

Enter NORMAN.

NORMAN.

I see her not. What, Violet?

FALKNER.

Art thou Norman?

NORMAN.

Falkner!

FALKNER.

Some villany is in the wind !
Scarce landed, when a rude band swept upon us;
Thy boatmen seized—the priest too;—I alone,
With my good sword, open'd a path for flight,
And, hurrying to thee with the news—

[*A shriek within the chapel.*

NORMAN.

That voice!—

[*Exit* NORMAN *within the chapel.*

FALKNER.

More sport!—egad, I feel at home to-night!

[*Exit* FALKNER *after* NORMAN.

Enter LUKE.

LUKE.

Who spoke?—Avast there!—Sure I heard—

Enter LADY ARUNDEL *and* Servants, *bearing torches, from the cave.*

LADY ARUNDEL.

Look round!
They must be here—Violet has left the castle.
It is the hour!—Who skulks there?—seize him!

[Servants *seize* LUKE.

Enter VIOLET *from the chapel, and falls at* LADY ARUNDEL'S *feet.*

VIOLET.

Save me!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Girl, girl—what means this?—where is HE—my—Norman?

VIOLET.

Stir not—the spot is desecrate. Methinks
Witchcraft and Murder reign there!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Ha!—I dare not
Set foot beyond that threshold.

VIOLET.

By mine honour—
Tho' thou wilt mock me—I do think to have seen
Two Normans by the altar!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

His dead father
Has left his grave!

VIOLET.

We crept through the dim aisles:
Sudden, a light—a form—a gleaming knife—
I shriek'd, and clung upon the murderous arm—
When, lo!—a second Norman:—on the floor
This lay—and there—avenging, stern, unearthly—
The other rose, gigantic, thro' the darkness!

FIRST SERVANT.

Help to our lady !—

LADY ARUNDEL (*waving him back*).

Sirs, I need ye not.
Fall back !—what more ?

VIOLET.

I know no more—I fled,
Darkling and blind with supernatural horror,
Along the dismal aisles.—
(*After a pause.*)
Oh ! mad—mad wretch !
Why rave I thus ?—danger and murder near him!
In—in !—your lights—your swords !

LADY ARUNDEL.

Open the tomb,
And I will front the Dead One !

[*The chapel doors are thrown open—the torch-bearers enter*—NORMAN *discovered near an old Gothic tomb, his sword drawn, standing before the body of* GAUSSEN.

It is the spot
On which the bridegroom fell before my eyes—
And now he stands as if in life !

VIOLET.

O Norman !—
You live—you live !

NORMAN.

Lo, where the father bled
The son has slain the slaughterer!—

LORD ASHDALE *and* FALKNER *advance.*

ASHDALE.

Thou!—my mother!
Where is the saviour of my life?—The stranger?

NORMAN (*coming in front of the stage*).

Embrace thy son—hear him! *I* saved his life!

ASHDALE.

Yes, when the knife was at my throat, his hand
Palsied the caitiff blow. I had well nigh fallen
Into the pit myself had dug. Thy plume
Deceived the blade design'd for thee. Nay, mother,
I am unscathed.

LADY ARUNDEL.

He saved thee—*He!*

[*The* Servants *remove the body.*

LUKE.

Your Worships,
If we have sinn'd, it was Sir Maurice Beevor
Whose monies bribed our chief.—The Knight desired
The blood of both—your Lordship and the stranger.

LORD ASHDALE.

Can this be true?

LADY ARUNDEL.

I can believe it. Now
His dark designs are clear!

FALKNER (*to* LUKE).

Our honest messmates—
Thou black-brow'd cutthroat—speak, where are they?—
speak!
If a hair on their heads be hurt—

LUKE.

Our leader dead,
Our business done—your men are safe!

FALKNER.

Lead on, then;
Advance the torches—follow.

NORMAN.

All the menials—
Take all—(*aside*) no hireling witness to the conference,
The last on earth, between the son and mother!

[*The* Servants *place torches on the crags of the forest-ground, and exeunt with* FALKNER *and* LUKE.

Manent LADY ARUNDEL—LORD ASHDALE—NORMAN—VIOLET.

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing towards the chapel*).

There rests what once was love, now dust! Perchance

The love still lives in heaven—and penitent prayer
The charm that spells the angels.

[*Enters and kneels by the old tomb.—The moon breaks forth.*

NORMAN.

Violet!
Wert thou deceived, too?

VIOLET.

Shame upon thee, cousin!

ASHDALE.

Fair stranger, stratagem in love all fair:—
Forgive my this day's frowardness—your hand—
'Tis well—you have saved my life; do more—resign
With a good grace this lady—she is highborn,
Of our own house;—too young to know her heart.
Your worth might make you noble;—but as yet
You have your spurs to win. Resign the maid,
But take the dower thrice told.

NORMAN.

Name, fortune, lands,
A mother's love—and now the only heart
That clings to mine—all! he takes all!—the ewe-lamb!

ASHDALE.

Thy silence gives consent. Oh, Violet, hear me!
I have too far presumed on my high fortunes—
Woo'd thee too rashly. Pardon me: renounce
This stranger—brave, but of no fitting birth—

And stand amidst the noblest dames in England,
The first in state as beauty!

VIOLET.

Norman, Norman!
Why art thou mute?—why dost thou gaze upon me?—
Why rest thy arms gather'd above thy breast,
As if to ward me thence?

NORMAN.

Go, look upon him!
His form more fair than mine, his hopes more high.
I have lost faith in human love! When mothers
Forsake their sons, why not the maid her lover?

VIOLET.

Methinks you mock me. Hear me, thou, Lord Ashdale.
You ask my hand—you proffer wealth, pomp, power,
And he but toil and danger!

NORMAN.

Thou hast said it.

VIOLET.

Behold my choice! There, where he stands, my fate is!
Take me, Oh, take me, Norman! Woman's love,
Once given, may break the heart that holds—but never
Melts into air, save with her latest sigh.

NORMAN.

Faithful amidst the faithless! Hope again

43421

Blooms through the desert. Hither, and let me hear
The music of one heart that answers mine!

ASHDALE.

It shall not be! Ignoble one! The life
Thou sav'dst is nothing without her!—the boon
Is cancell'd. To thy weapon—foot to foot—
Let valour win the prize!

NORMAN.

I will not harm thee.

ASHDALE.

Insolent boaster! "*Harm!*"—what! neither yield
Nor yet defend? What would'st thou?

NORMAN.

What? why, stab me
Here, in these arms, and I'll forgive thee! Do it;
And tell thy mother, when thy holiday blade
Was raised to smite, my warrior sword fell—thus!

ASHDALE.

Saints, give me patience!

LADY ARUNDEL (*advancing from the chapel*).

Ay, upon the stone
Where his bones sleep I have pray'd; and I have gain'd
The strength that is not of the world! How, Percy?
Thy sword drawn on thy——

NORMAN.

Hush! I have kept thy secret!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Unhappy boy!

ASHDALE.

Why turn thine eyes from him
To me? and straight again to him?

LADY ARUNDEL.

Approach,
Percy, my son!—Lord Ashdale now no more—
Behold thy brother! Ay, the conscience wrings
Out truth at last:—Thine elder, the sole heir
To this ill-fated house!

ASHDALE.

This is delirium!

LADY ARUNDEL.

It is not so, irreverent one! Here, Arthur,
Into thy hands I do restore the proofs
That re-assert thy rights—my eldest born,
By long-conceal'd, but holiest wedlock with
Arthur Le Mesnil! To his breast, my Percy!
There is none nobler!

NORMAN.

Wilt thou not, my brother?
Whate'er is mine——

ASHDALE.

Is *thine*—And dost thou deem
That I will fawn, a beggar, on thy bounty?
Lackey thy heels, and crawl for crumbs that fall
From the rich, bounteous, elder brother's board?
Ha, ha! I'd rather couch with the wild boar,
And starve on acorns, than the world should cry,
"See once proud Ashdale, the meek younger brother!"

LADY ARUNDEL.

Percy, my best-loved!

ASHDALE.

Mother, is it so?
Say that thou didst but sport upon my pride;
That thou wouldst try me! Speak!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Alas, alas!
It is the truth!

ASHDALE.

All is unravell'd now!
I ask no proofs—thy looks suffice for proof!
I will not hear a tale, perhaps of shame!
So, a long farewell, mother!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Do not leave me!
Oh, do not leave me! Think how I have loved thee!
How, for thy sake, I sinn'd against my soul,

And veil'd, and barr'd, and would have crush'd his rights,
All, all for thee!

VIOLET (*timidly*).

We are young—we love each other!
We do not want titles and gold, my Norman!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Say you forgive—and yet, what have *you* to pardon?

ASHDALE.

Everything, madam. Had you shaped my youth
Unto the pauper lot which waits me now,
I had not nursed desires, and pamper'd wants,
Into a second nature: my good sword,
And my free heart, the genii of my fortunes.
Oh, thou hast wrong'd me foully!

NORMAN.

Shame, boy, shame!
Dost thou with ruthless and ungrateful taunts
Answer those agonizing tears! Ah, mother,
I loved thee more than he does!—Thou repentest!
Thou tak'st her hand!—Forgive him!
(*Solemnly.*)
My dead father!
I never saw thee living; but methinks
Thy presence fills my soul!—Poor trembling mourner!
If, as I feel, that low-born father loved thee
Not for thy gold and lands—from yonder grave
His spirit would chide the son who for such gauds

Would make the bond and pledge of the love he bore thee
A source of shame and sorrow—not of solace!—
Hear him then speak in me!—as lightly as
I, from this mantle, shake the glistening dews,
So my soul shakes off the unwholesome thoughts
Born of the cloud and earth.—

(*Goes to the torches.*)

Look ye—all dead!
My sire—the priest—all who attest my rights!
With a calm hand, unto this flame I yield
What rest, these scrolls!—and as the fire consumes them,
So wither all that henceforth can dismay
Or haunt thy heart, my mother!—

ASHDALE.

Hold—hold—no!
I am not so base—'twas but a moment's weakness.
Hail the true heir!

(*Falling on his breast.*)

My brother—oh, my brother!

NORMAN,

A mother and a brother, both!—O joy!

LADY ARUNDEL.

My children in each other's arms!—

ASHDALE.

Now summon
All friends, and let them know the rightful heir.

LADY ARUNDEL.

True—be the justice done—an awful tale:
But ye shall hear me speak it. (*falteringly*) My poor Percy!
My father's crime too—well—

NORMAN.

You mark her, brother.
Shall we bring this upon her?—
[*Holding the papers over the torches till they are consumed.*
It is past!
Now, never more a bar betwixt *your* hearts
And mine—ah, mother! *now* thine arms embrace me—
Now thy kiss melts into my soul!—

LADY ARUNDEL.

Oh, bless thee!—

NORMAN.

Hark! she has bless'd her son—I bid ye witness,
Ye listening Heavens—thou circumambient air:
The ocean sighs it back—and with the murmur
Rustle the happy leaves. All Nature breathes
Aloud—aloft—to the Great Parent's ear,
The blessing of the mother on her child.

ASHDALE,

How nobler this than our nobility!

NORMAN.

Each to his element!—the land has form'd

Thy nature as the hardy ocean mine.
It is no sacrifice. By men and angels!
Better one laurel-leaf the brave hand gathers
Than all the diadems pluck'd from dead men's brows—
So speaks my father's son!—Were there before us
All—all who in this busy and vast mart
Of merchant traffickers—this land of England—
Worship the yellow god—how one great truth
Should shake the sceptred Mammon on his throne!
Here, in our souls, we treasure up the wealth
Fraud cannot filch, nor waste destroy;—the more
'Tis spent, the more we have;—the sweet affections—
The heart's religion—the diviner instincts
Of what we *shall* be when the world is dust!
Is it so, Violet?

VIOLET.

I never loved thee—
No, never—till this hour! A moment since,
When thou wert what the wrong world calls more great,
Methought thou wert less Norman!

ASHDALE.

It must *not* be.
Fire cannot quench thy claims—at least together
We'll live, and share alike.

NORMAN.

Thou shalt find vent
For generous thoughts. Give me what dower thou wilt
With Violet, if ungrieving thou canst yield
That priceless treasure to me now, my brother!

LADY ARUNDEL.

The dower shall halve the heritage.

ASHDALE.

Sweet cousin,
Forgive me!—All the heat of my wild will
Melts in the light of that bright soul,—and never
Did knight upon the hand of some fair queen
Press lips of holier and more loyal homage,
Than this pure kiss which hails a brother's bride.

Enter SIR MAURICE (*with a bag*).

SIR MAURICE.

All done ere this!—My patent is made out.
Ugh! but the fees are heavy!—Ha, these torches!
Confusion!—(*drops the bag.*)

ASHDALE.

Knave, thy hireling is no more!
Take up thy bribe!

LADY ARUNDEL.

Was it for this, base ingrate,
Thou didst ask gold?—a double murder!

SIR MAURICE.

Hush!
He'll hear.

LADY ARUNDEL.

Begone!

SIR MAURICE (*clinging to* LORD ASHDALE).

'Twas meant in kindness, Hotspur.

ASHDALE.

Off, or I spurn thee, hang-dog!

SIR MAURICE.

Spurn me!—Thou
Shalt live to crawl to me for pence!—All hail,
Arthur, the heir of Arundel!—thy claims—

NORMAN.

Are nought.

SIR MAURICE.

How?—but the proofs—

NORMAN.

No proofs, but of thy guilt!

SIR MAURICE.

O, wrong'd young man!
[NORMAN *points significantly to the torches.*
I see it—I'm robb'd and murder'd!

NORMAN.

Hence! and be mute on what concerns thee not—
Or——But I will not threaten thy grey hairs.—
Hence, and repent!

SIR MAURICE.

I thank you kindly, sir:
I am a very poor old Knight!—My Lord,
Your very humble cousin!—To my grave
A sordid, spat-upon, revengeless, worthless,

And rascally poor cousin !—Yes, I'll go
Bury my monies—hang myself—and make
The parish pay the funeral !—Ugh !—I'll spite them !
[*Exit.*

Enter FALKNER, Chaplain, Sailors, &c.

FALKNER.

Captain—the priest—and now the ship's in sight—
Wind and tide serve.

LADY ARUNDEL.

I cannot part from thee,
My long-lost—my beloved !

NORMAN.

We will not part !
Violet the link that binds me to thy hearth,
And makes thy love (tho' secret the true cause)
Not in the world's eye strange ;—we will not part
Till the first moon of wedded love be o'er ;
And then, if glory call me to the seas,
Thine eyes shall lure me back from year to year.

LADY ARUNDEL.

If ever thou repent'st—

ASHDALE.

The half I hold
Thine with the birthright.

NORMAN.

Nay, your love my birthright;
And for the rest, who can aspire to more
Than a true heart for ever blent with his—
Blessings when absent—welcome when return'd;—
His merry bark with England's flag to crown her,
Fame for his hopes, and woman in his cares?

THE END.

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